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MORI/CDP
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SUNDAY, MAY 12, 1974

FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT

State Dept. review completed

FROM: THE SECRETARY

PLEASE PASS FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT: ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

1. I PRESENTED TODAY TO ASAD THE LATEST ISRAELI MAP WHICH DRAWS THE DEFENSE LINE AROUND KUNEITRA AND INCLUDES TWO SLICES WEST OF THE LINE THAT EXISTED AT THE TIME OF THE OCTOBER 1973 WAR. WHILE ASAD DID NOT REJECT THE PROPOSAL, HE TOOK STRONG EXCEPTION TO IT AND ASKED FOR ADJUSTMENTS IN THE LINE WHICH GO BEYOND THE SYMBOLIC MOVES OF AT MOST ONE KILOMETER WEST OF THE OCTOBER LINE WHICH WERE EMBRACED IN THE ISRAELI PLAN. ASAD STRESSED IN PARTICULAR THAT WITH THE ISRAELI DEFENSE LINE RUNNING THROUGH KUNEITRA HE COULD NOT SEND IN ANY SYRIAN CIVILIANS SINCE THEY WOULD BE UNDER THREAT OF ISRAELI GUNS AND POSITIONS IN THE SURROUNDING HILLS, AND HE NEEDED MORE LANDS WHERE HE COULD RESETTLE HIS PEOPLE IN VARIOUS VILLAGES IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH.

2. TWO THINGS IMPRESSED ME IN PARTICULAR ABOUT THE ASAD MEETING: (A) I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WANTS AN AGREEMENT BUT HAS A PROBLEM BRINGING ALONG PEOPLE WHO HAD THOUGHT OF ISRAELIS AS DEVILS FOR 26 YEARS; AND (B) HE USED THE MEETING TO BRING IN KEY LEADERS IN HIS ADMINISTRATION--THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, THE CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE AND THE CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE IN ADDITION TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER--AN OBVIOUS WAY TO BUILD A CONSENSUS.

3. I MET FOR THREE HOURS THIS EVENING WITH PRIME MINISTER MEIR AND HER COLLEAGES AND GAVE THEM A FULL REPORT OF THE ASAD MEETING. IN PARTICULAR I STRESSED THE POSITIVE BENEFITS THAT WOULD RESULT FROM A SUCCESSFUL DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT TO ISRAEL, TO THE US DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS, THE RESULTANT DECOUPLING OF SOVIET SUPPORT OF THE ARABS, AND ALL OF THE POSITIVE TRENDS THAT HAVE DEVELOPED IN THE MIDDLE EAST OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS. BY THE SAME TOKEN I PAINTED THE REALISTICALLY DARK SITUATION THAT WILL FACE THE ISRAELIS -- AND US -- IF THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT FAILS, AND WE LOSE CONTROL OVER THE DIPLOMACY AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF THE KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA. AGAIN I STRESSED THE THEME, WHICH I HAVE REPORTED TO YOU IN SOME DETAIL IN PAST MESSAGES, OF HOW ESSENTIAL IT IS FOR THE ISRAELIS TO LOOK AT THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT IN A BROAD POLITICAL CONTEXT RATHER THAN THE MARGINAL AND NARROW TACTICAL CONSIDERATION AND QUIBBLES OVER ONE OR TWO KILOMETERS HERE AND THERE. I DOUBT THAT I MADE MUCH OF AN IMPRESSION.

4. I HAVE ASKED FOR A FURTHER MEETING WITH MRS. MEIR AND HER KEY CABINET MEMBERS FOR 10:00 A.M. TOMORROW MORNING BEFORE SHE RECONVENES HER FULL CABINET. I PLAN IN VERY STRONG TERMS TO INSIST THAT THEY CONSIDER SOME CHANGE IN AND AROUND THE KUNEITRA AREA WHILE HOLDING ON TO THE HILLS. WE HAVE IN MIND A UN-BUFFER BELT OF A KILOMETER OR SO AROUND THE CITY. SECONDLY, I HAVE ASKED THE ISRAELIS TO REEXAMINE THEIR PRESENT LINE OF DISENGAGEMENT, BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH, TO SEE WHETHER FURTHER ADJUSTMENTS CAN BE MADE SO THAT THE SYRIANS CAN HAVE RETURNED TO THEM A NUMBER OF VILLAGES FOR RESETTLEMENT PURPOSES. NEITHER OF THE ABOVE CHANGES WOULD IN ANY WAY AFFECT ADVERSELY THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF THE ISRAELIS ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS. I AM NOT AT ALL CERTAIN THAT THIS WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO MEET ASAD'S NEEDS, BUT I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT I TAKE SOMETHING ALONG THESE LINES BACK TO DAMASCUS ON TUESDAY. IF IT FAILS, WE WILL HAVE TO SUSPEND THE TALKS IN THE LEAST DAMAGING WAY.

5. I DO NOT ASK YOU TO DO ANYTHING MORE ON THIS MATTER AT THIS TIME SINCE I BELIEVE YOUR MESSAGES OVER THE RECENT DAYS HAVE BEEN MOST HELPFUL. I HOPE THE ISRAELIS WILL TAKE A BROAD VIEW.

WARM REGARDS.

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SECRET/SENSITIVE

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HAKTO 81

Sunday, May 12, 1974

FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM: THE SECRETARY *W*

Please pass following message to President:

1. I presented today to Asad the latest Israeli map which draws the defense line around Kuneitra and includes two slices west of the line that existed at the time of the October 1973 war. While Asad did not reject the proposal, he took strong exception to it and asked for adjustments in the line which go beyond the symbolic moves of at most one kilometer west of the October line which were embraced in the Israeli plan. Asad stressed in particular that with the Israeli defense line running through Kuneitra he could not send in any Syrian civilians since they would be under threat of Israeli guns and positions in the surrounding hills, and he needed more lands where he could resettle his people in various villages in the north and south.

2. Two things impressed me in particular about the Asad meeting:
(a) I had the impression that he wants an agreement but has a problem bringing along people who had thought of Israelis as devils for 26 years; and (b) he used the meeting to bring in key leaders in his administration--the Minister of Defense, the Chief of the Air Force

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and the Chief of Intelligence in addition to the Foreign Minister -- an obvious way to build a consensus.

3. I met for three hours this evening with Prime Minister Meir and her colleagues and gave them a full report of the Asad meeting. In particular I stressed the positive benefits that would result from a successful disengagement agreement to Israel, to the US diplomatic efforts, the resultant decoupling of Soviet support of the Arabs, and all of the positive trends that have developed in the Middle East over the past six months. By the same token I painted the realistically stark situation that will face the Israelis -- and us -- if the disengagement agreement fails, and we lose control over the diplomacy as well as a number of the key developments in the area. Again I stressed the theme, which I have reported to you in some detail in past messages, ^{of} ~~on~~ how essential it is for the Israelis to look at the disengagement agreement in a broad political context rather than the marginal and narrow ~~strategic~~ tactical consideration and quibbles over one or two kilometers here and there. I doubt that I made much of an impression.

4. I have asked for a further meeting with Mrs. Meir and her key Cabinet members for 10:00 a.m. tomorrow morning before she reconvenes her full Cabinet. I plan in very strong terms to insist that

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they consider some change in and around the Kuneitra area while holding on to the hills. We have in mind a UN buffer belt of a kilometer or so around the city. Secondly, I have asked the Israelis to reexamine their present line of disengagement, both north and south, to see whether further adjustments can be made so that the Syrians can have returned to them a number of villages for resettlement purposes. Neither of the above changes would in any way affect adversely the strategic position of the Israelis on the Golan Heights. I am not at all certain that this would be sufficient to meet Asad's needs, but I believe it is important that I take something along these lines back to Damascus on Tuesday. If it fails, we will have to suspend the talks in the least damaging way.

5c. I do not ask you to do anything more on this matter at this time since I believe your messages over the recent days have been most helpful. I hope the Israelis will take a broad view.

Warm regards.

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HAKTO 81

~~May 13, 1974~~ Sunday, May 12, 1974

FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM: THE SECRETARY

Please pass following message to President:

1. I presented today to Asad the latest Israeli map which draws the defense line around Kuneitra and includes two slices west of the line that existed at the time of the October 1973 war. While Asad did not reject the proposal, he took strong exception to it and asked for adjustments in the line which go beyond the symbolic moves west of the October line which were embraced in the Israeli plan. Asad stressed in particular that with the Israeli ~~defensive~~ defense line ~~right up~~ ^{running through} against Kuneitra he could not send in any Syrian civilians since they would be under threat of Israeli guns and positions in the surrounding hills, and he needed more lands where he could resettle his people in various villages in the north and south.

2. Two things impressed me in particular about the Asad meeting:

(a) ~~that it was an entirely rational conversation and his reasons for~~

2. Had the impression that he wants an agreement but has a problem bringing along people who had thought of Israelis as devils for 26 years

-3-

4. I have asked for a further meeting with Mrs. Meir and her key Cabinet members for 10:00 a.m. tomorrow morning before she reconvenes her full Cabinet. I ~~have asked specifically that~~ *plan in very strong terms to insist that* they consider some change in and around the Kuneitra area while holding on to the hills, ~~which would give some assurance to the Syrians that they would move civilians back into the town of Kuneitra.~~ We have in mind a UN buffer belt of a kilometer or so around the city. Secondly, I have ~~asked them~~ *the Israelis* to reexamine their present line of disengagement, both north and south, to see whether further adjustments can be made so that the Syrians can have returned to them a number of ~~old~~ villages for resettlement purposes. ~~Neither~~ Neither of the above changes would in any way affect adversely the strategic position of the Israelis on the Golan Heights. I am not at all certain that this would be sufficient to meet Asad's needs, but I believe it is important that I take something along these line back to Damascus on Tuesday, ~~not only~~ *If it fails,* ~~as the probably final effort to achieve agreement but also to give~~ *me will have to suspend the talks in the* ~~least damaging way~~ *Asad an opportunity to show his key leaders that dealing with us can produce positive results*

5. I do not ask you to do anything more on this matter ^{at this time} since I believe your messages over the recent days have been most helpful. *I hope the Israelis will take a broad view,*

6. Warm regards.

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~~changes were substantively based~~; and (b) he used the meeting to bring in key leaders in his administration -- the Minister of Defense , the Chief of the Air Force and the Chief of Intelligence in addition to the Foreign Minister -- ~~which all of us took as further~~ *an obvious way to build a consensus* ~~evidence that Syria would like to get a disengagement, if at all possible.~~

this evening
 3. I met for three hours with Prime Minister Meir and her colleagues and gave them a full report of the Asad meeting. In particular I stressed the positive benefits that would result from a successful disengagement agreement to Israel, to the US diplomatic efforts, ~~and further~~ *the resultant* decoupling of Soviet support of the Arabs, and all of the positive trends that have developed *in the Mide East* over the past six months. By the same token I painted the realistically stark situation that will face the Israelis -- and us if the *the* disengagement agreement fails, and we lose control over the diplomacy as well as a number of the key developments in the area. Again I stressed the theme, *on* which I have reported to you in some detail in past messages, how essential it is for the Israelis to look at the disengagement agreement in a broad political context, *rather* than the marginal and narrow strategic tactical considerations and quibbles over one or two kilometers here and there. *I doubt*

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